Transitions in Sailors Alcohol Use before Entering Basic Training and During A-School

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Presented by

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RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute.

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- Members of Tobacco Etiology Research Network (TERN)
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Demographics of Sample

- Gender
  - Males 88%
  - Females 12%
- Race/Ethnicity
  - White, non-Hispanic 60%
  - Black, non-Hispanic 11%
  - Hispanic 13%
  - Other 12%
  - No answer 4%
- Marital Status
  - Single 89%
  - Married 11%

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Analytical Approach

- Comparisons of alcohol use before Basic Training with use after Basic or in the past 30 days
- Some analyses used Multilevel Multinomial Logistic Regression that controlled for Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Living Location, and Marital Status.
- Abstainers were reference category

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Research Questions

1. What are the patterns of acquisition (new users) and reacquisition (return to alcohol) following the forced abstinence of basic training?
2. How soon after completion of basic training do new sailors acquire/reacquire alcohol patterns?

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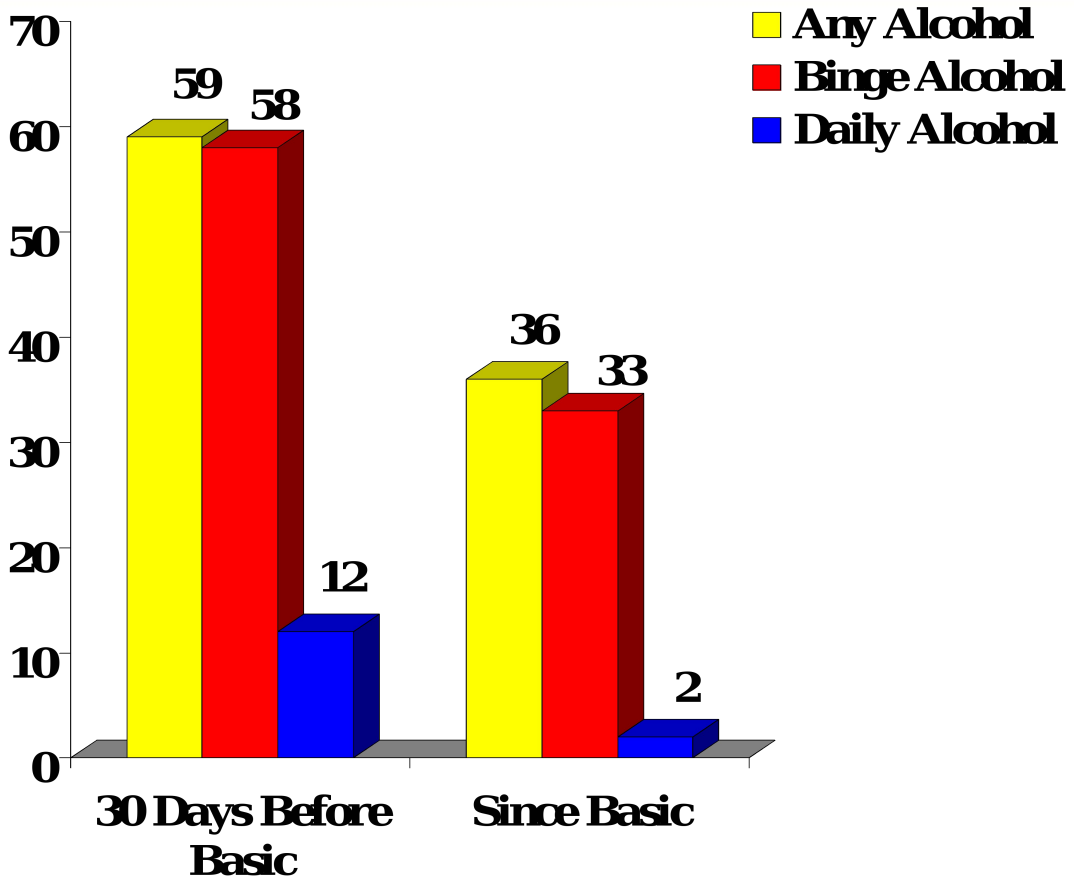
Alcohol Use 30 Days Before Basic and After Basic



Binge= 5+ drinks per drinking occasion at least once in past 30

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Alcohol Pattern Classification

	Used Before Basic	Used After Basic
Acquired:	No	Yes
Reacquired:	Yes	Yes
Quit	Yes	No
Abstained	No	No

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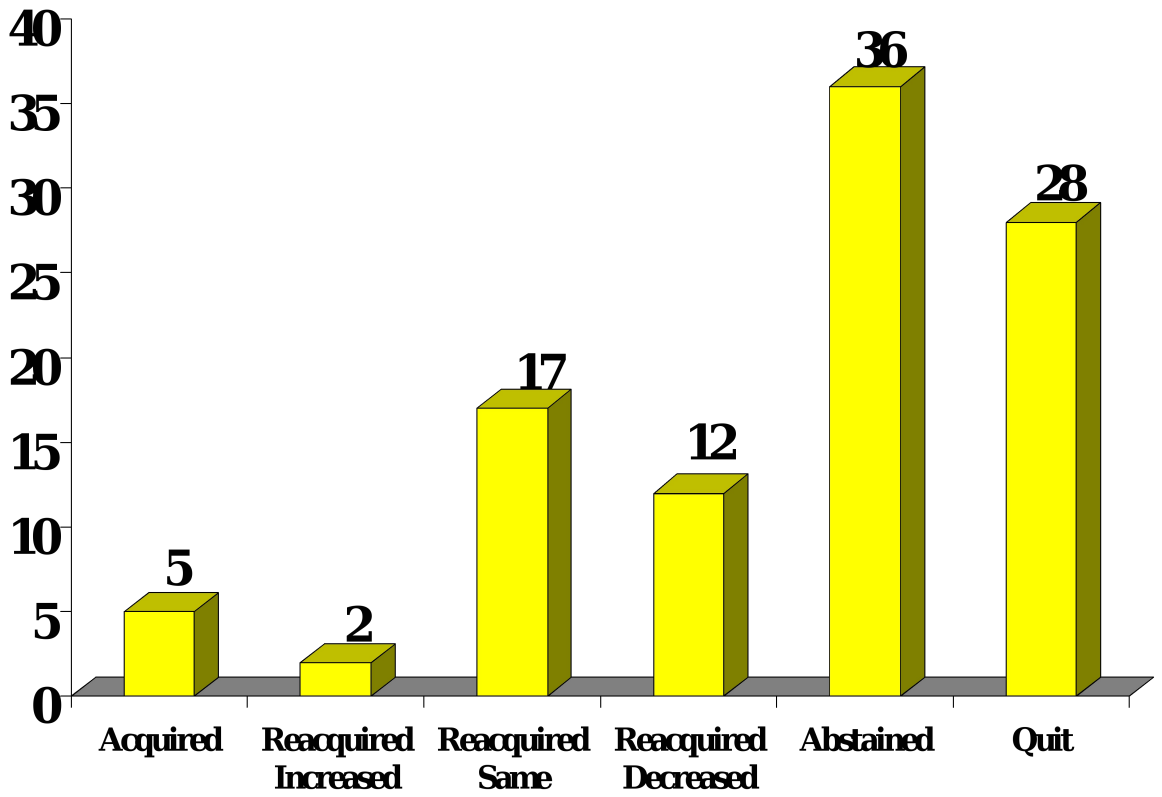
Changes in Alcohol Use Before and After Basic Training



Total Reacquired =31%; Total decreased=40%

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Contrasts in Alcohol Use 30 Days Prior to Basic and Since the End of Basic

Alcohol Use Prior to Basic	Alcohol Use Since End of Basic: None	1-2 Per Month	1-2 Per Week	Daily	Total
None	36	4	1	0	41
1-2 Per Month	12	7	2	0	21
1-2 Per Week	12	6	8	0	26
Daily	4	2	4	2	12
Total	64	19	15	2	100

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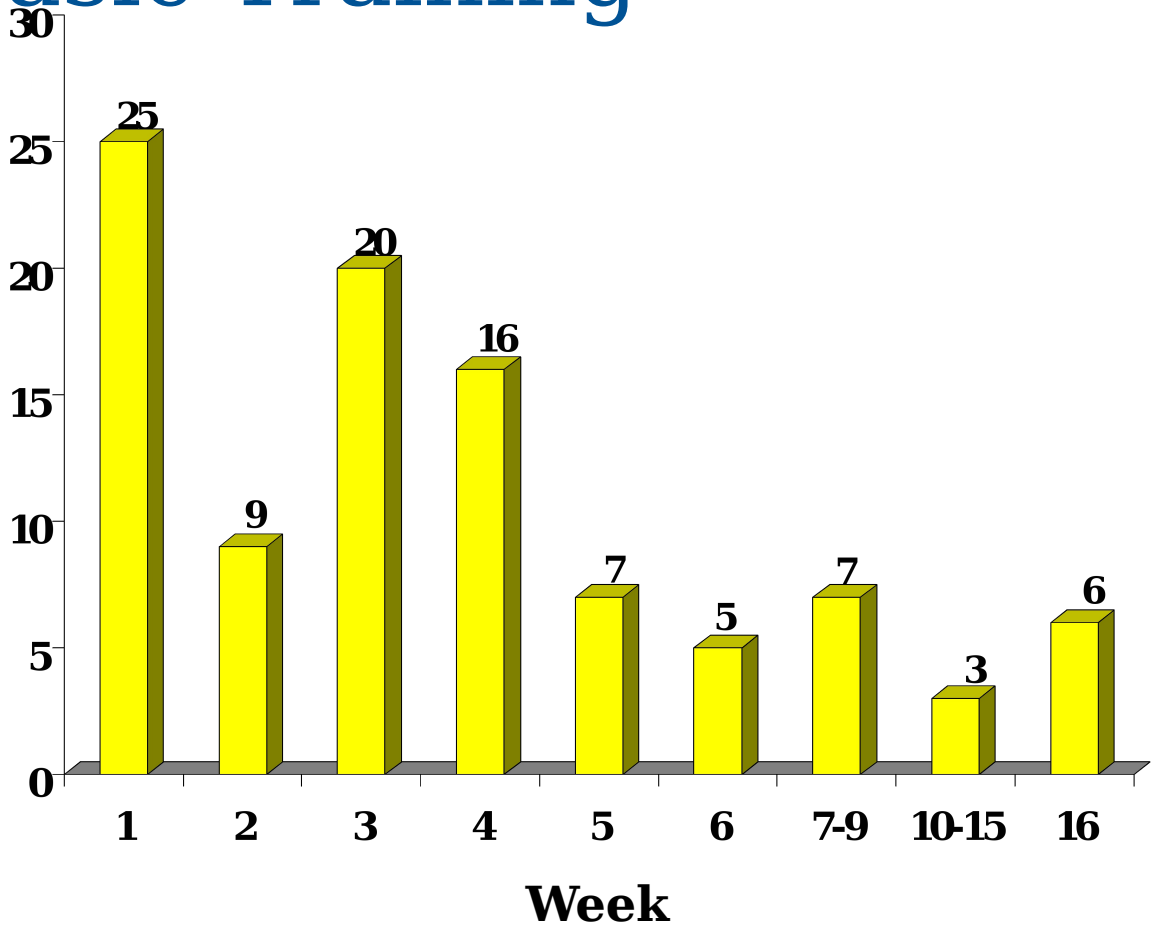
Percentage of Trainees Acquiring or Reacquiring Alcohol Use, by Week after Basic Training



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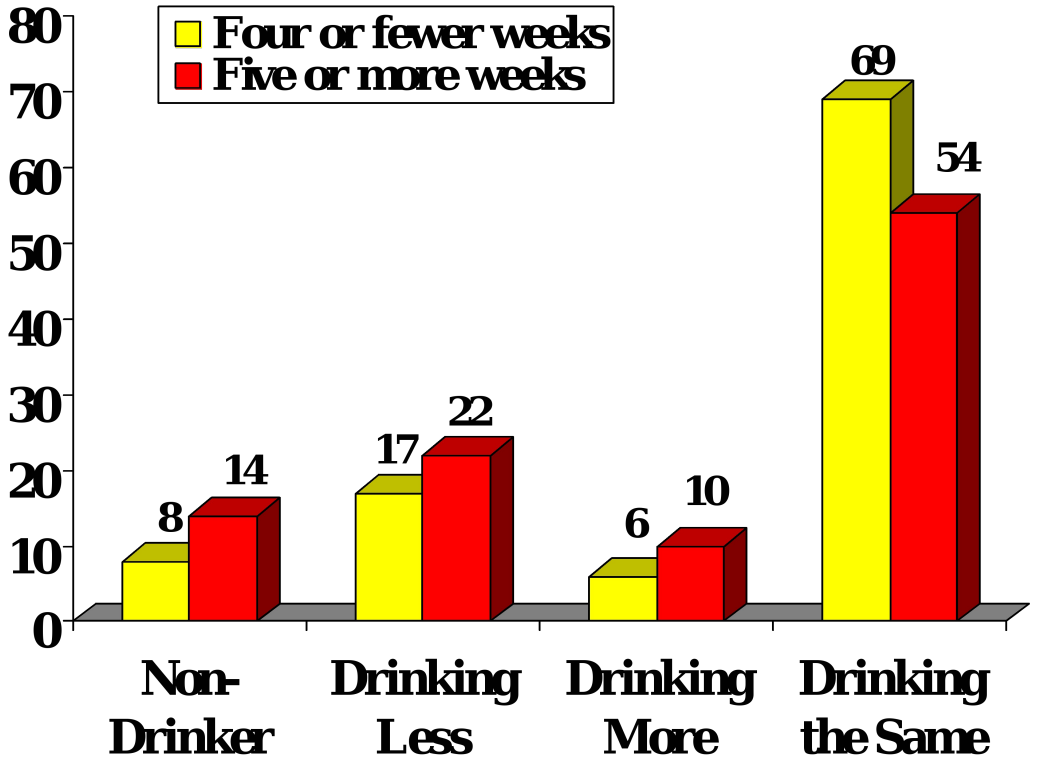
Comparison of Changes in Drinking Pattern by Weeks of A-School Training



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Alcohol Quantity and Frequency Definitions

- Low Quantity = 0-4 drinks per occasion
- High Quantity = 5+ drinks per occasion
- Low Frequency = 3 or fewer days/month
- High Frequency = 4 or more days/month

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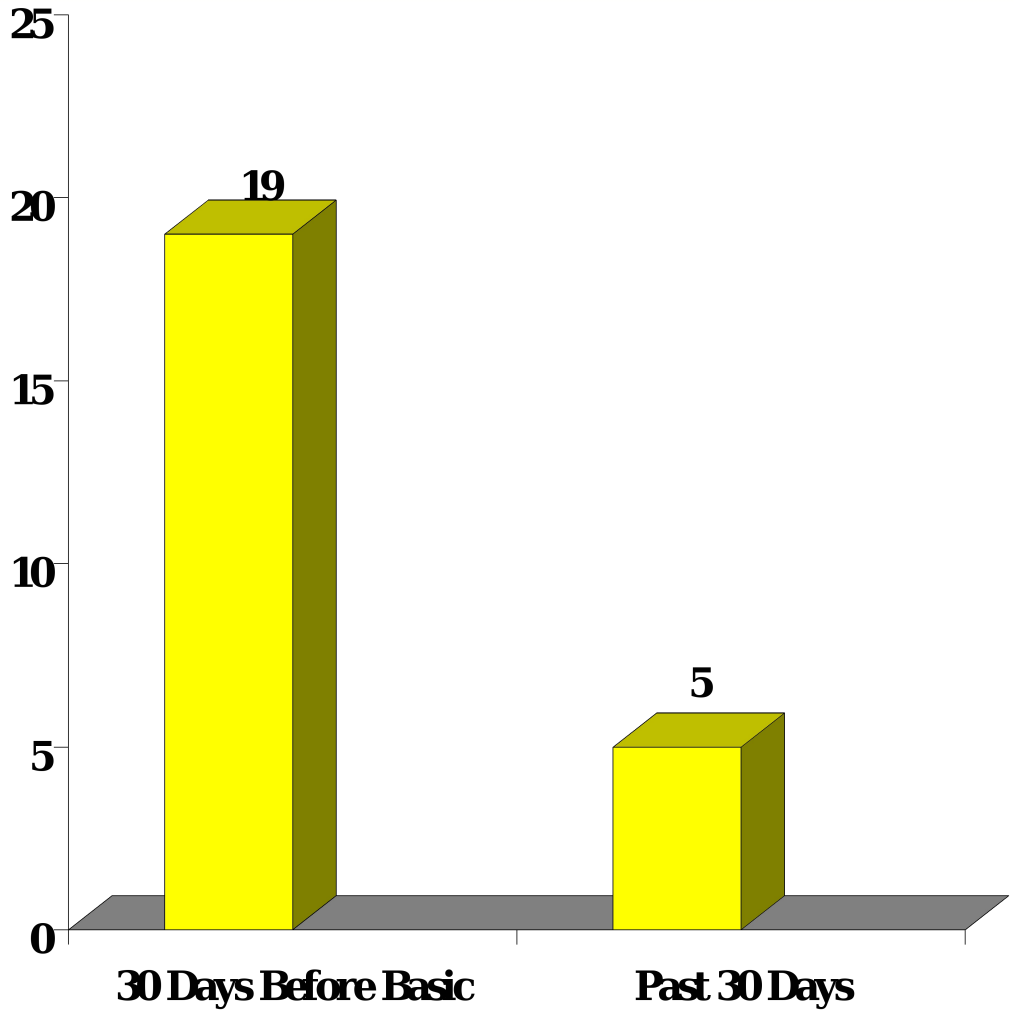
High Quantity/High Frequency Alcohol Use by A-School Students



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Changes in Quantity and Frequency of Alcohol Use (percent)

		Quantity		
		Low	High	Total
30 Days Before Basic	Low Frequency	56	20	77
	High Frequency	4	19	23
	Total	60	40	100
Past 30 Days	Low Frequency	79	15	94
	High Frequency	1	5	6
	Total	80	20	100

Low Frequency = 3 or fewer days/month
High Frequency = 4 or more days/month
Low Quantity = 0-4 drinks per occasion
High Quantity = 5+ drinks per occasion

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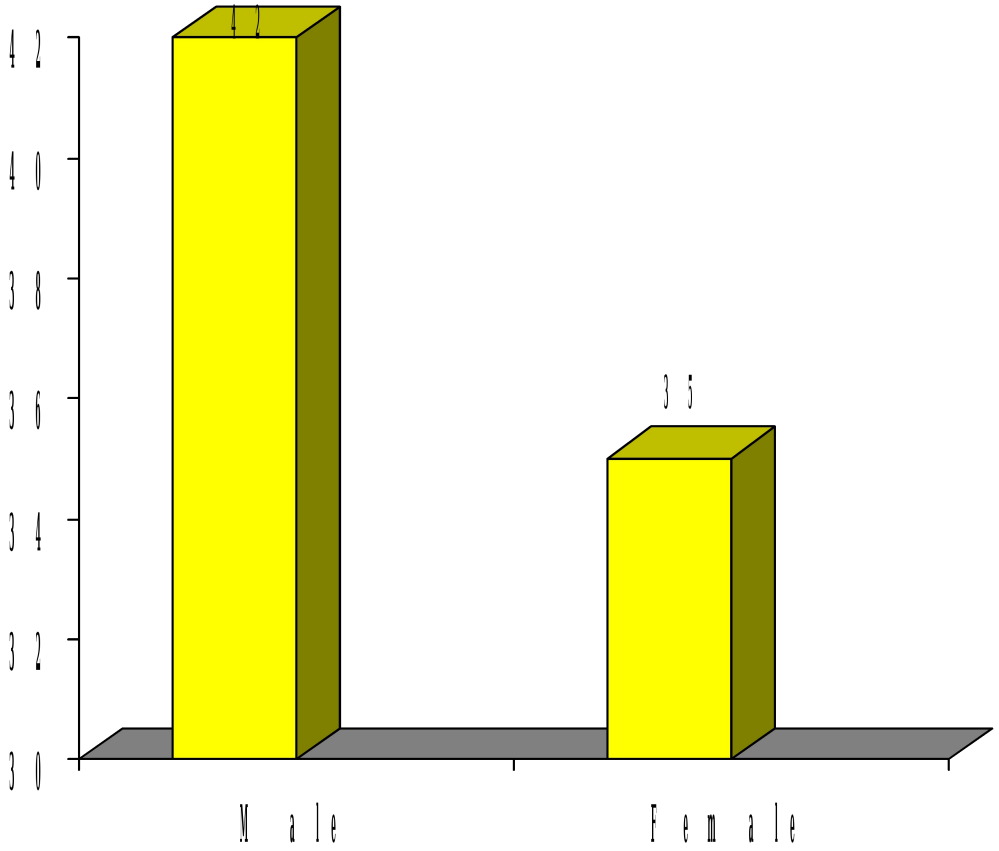
Binge Drinking by Gender



Binge= 5+ drinks per drinking occasion at least once in past 30 days

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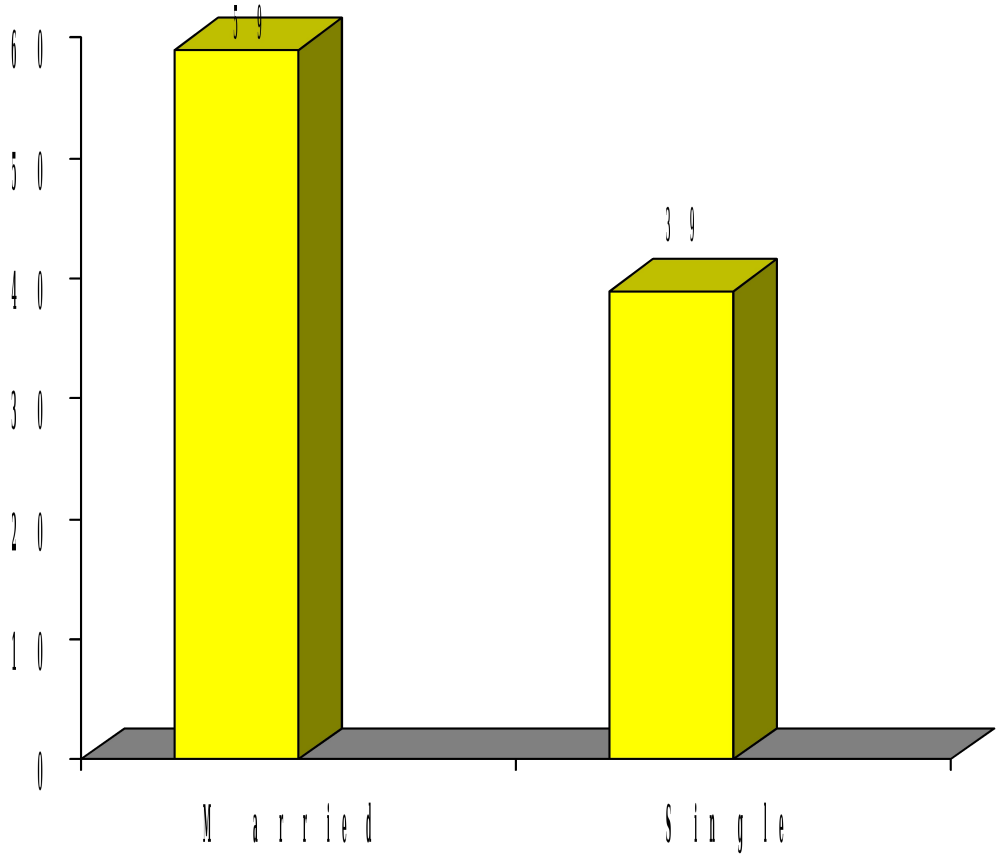
Binge Drinking by Marital Status



Binge= 5+ drinks per drinking occasion at least once in pas

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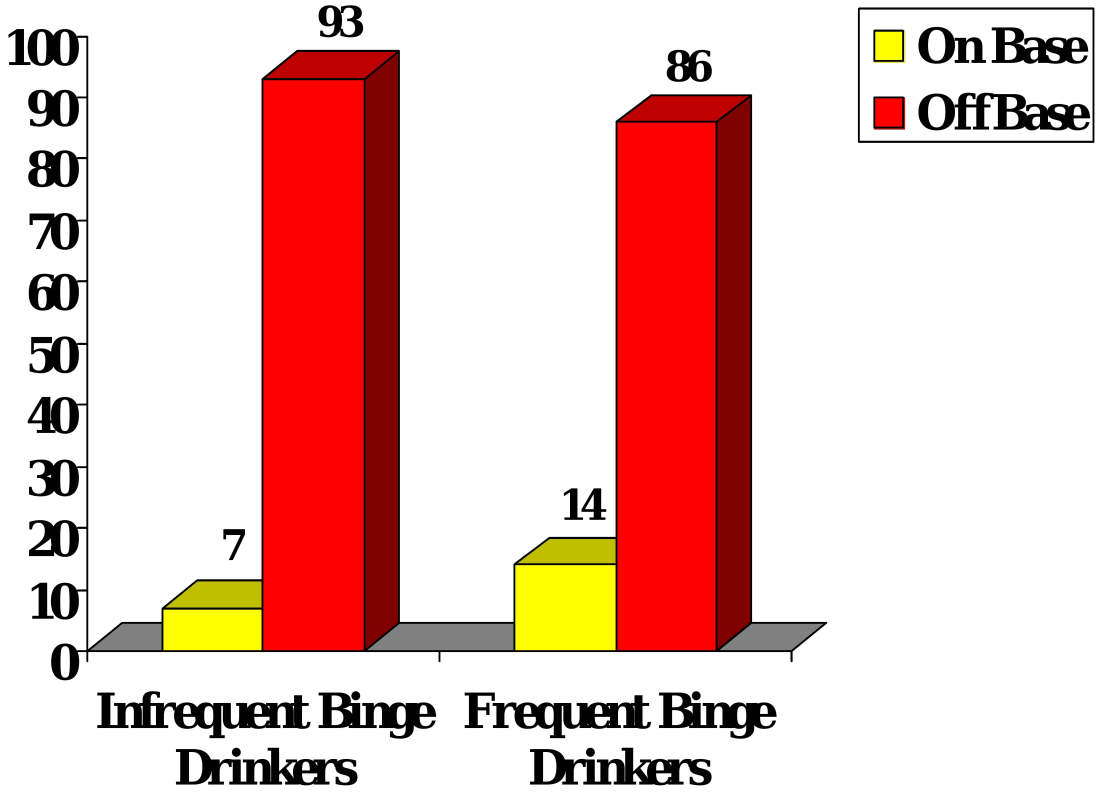
Binge Drinking Frequency by Drinking Location (among Binge drinkers)



Infrequent Binge= 5+ drinks per occasion at least once in p
Frequent Binge= 5+ drinks per occasion at least once per w

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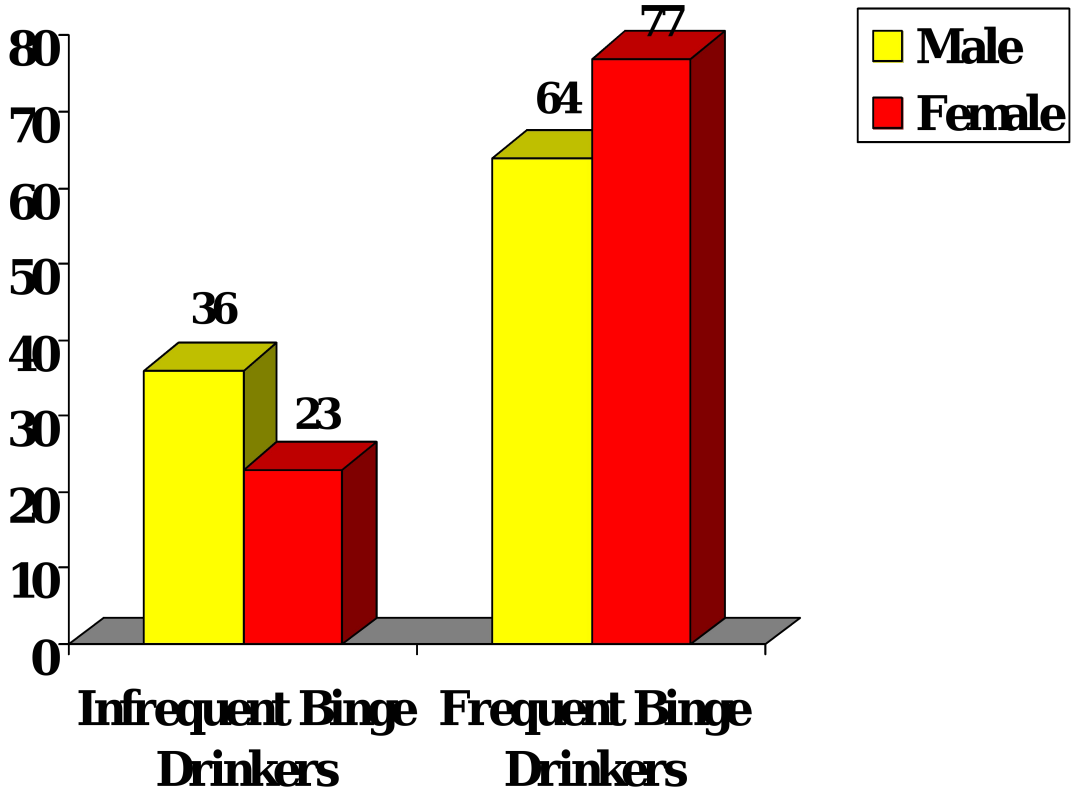
Binge Drinking Frequency by Gender (among Binge Drinkers)



Infrequent Binge= 5+ drinks per occasion at least once in p
Frequent Binge= 5+ drinks per occasion at least once per w

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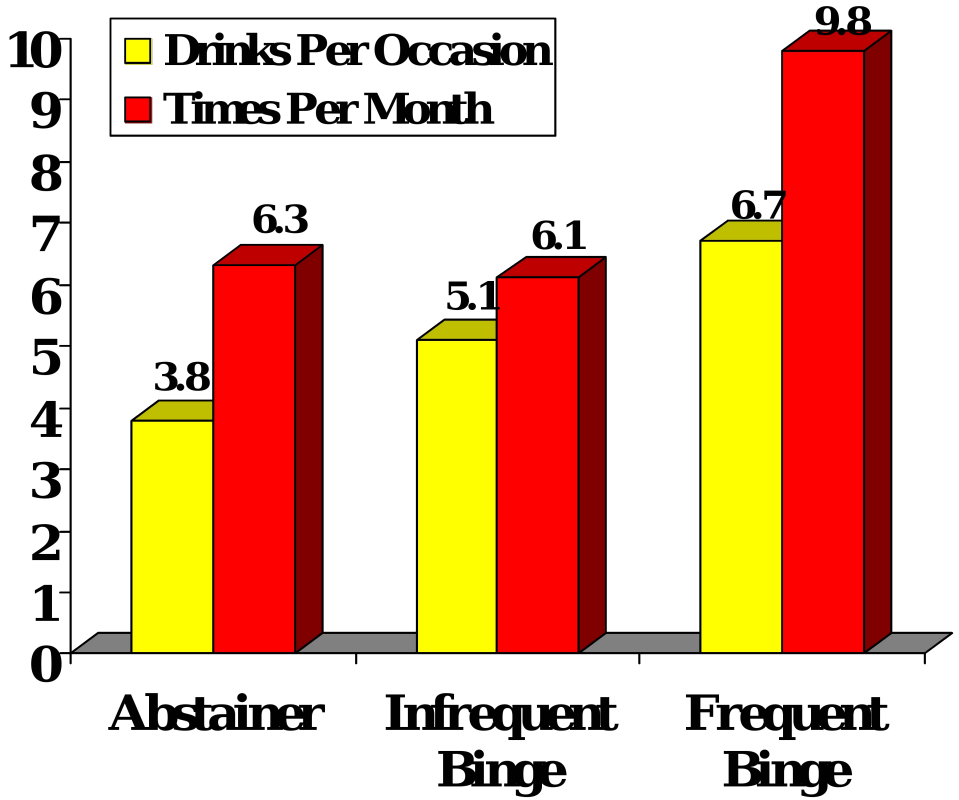
Perceptions of Alcohol Use among Typical A-School Students by Drinking Level



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Advice from Recruiter about Alcohol Use Between Enlistment and Start of Basic

Completely quit before basic	18%
Cut down before basic	9%
Talked about it but no suggestion	11%
Did not discuss	63%

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Agreement with Reasons for Drinking among High Quantity Drinkers

- Positive Reasons:
  - Helps me to be sociable = 46%
  - Allows people to have more fun = 61%
  - Helps me relax = 62%
  - Increases sexual opportunities = 49%
- Negative Reasons:
  - Bad for my health = 52%
  - Costs too much = 57%
  - Can make me feel sick = 47%
  - Can get me in trouble = 47%
  - Drink/drive can get me in trouble with police = 76%

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Summary of Alcohol Findings

- 40% of A-School Sailors have decreased alcohol use from pre-military rates
- 80% of A-School Sailors are drinking low quantity (0-4 drinks per occasion)
- 70% of those using alcohol in past 30 days begin drinking within the first 4 weeks after basic training
- Binge drinking more likely among males and married personnel and to occur off-base

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Limitations

- Preliminary findings
- Data have not been fully explored
- Need longer timeline to establish true rates of acquisition and reacquisition
- Quantity/Frequency Alcohol data do not reflect the percentage for whom the past 30 days may have included some portion of basic training so true drinking rates may be higher.

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Conclusions/Future Directions

- 36% have acquired or reacquired alcohol since basic and may be at risk for problems.
- Restricting access to alcohol for the first month of A-School may lower rates of heavy drinking.
- Education is not enough – heaviest drinkers are well aware of negative consequences, yet they continue to drink.
- Early brief interventions may be particularly effective with this

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